

Silver Spring Urban District Committee
Meeting Minutes
July 20, 2006

Members Present: Edward Baca-Asher, Genny Hardesty, Charles Atwell, and Bob Middleton

Members Absent: Bryant Foulger and Barbara Henry

Guest: Larry Hoffman, John Van Hoven, Aurelia Martin, Renee Okon, Jon Lourie, Dale Mangum, Abrielle Anderson, Pete Esker, Jane Redicker, Mitch Cunningham and Nancy Schwiesow

Staff: Gary Stith, Vicki Lockerman, Susan Hoffmann, Jerry Sanford, Muriel Bowser and Mel Tull

Welcome/Introductions – Genny Hardesty, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

Chairs Report:

Genny Hardesty thanked the Committee members for electing her the new Chair of the Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee for 2006-2007 Session. As the new Chair of the Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee there are some important issues that I feel the Committee should continue to focus on this year and they are:

- The Transit Center being added in Silver Spring which will be a wonderful for the community and we will live through some growing pains before it is completed in a couple of years with temporary bus stations moving out of their permanent home.
- The Bi-County Transitway will be incredible and give much more connectivity. We have all seen presentations and been reading about MTA comments presented both to the Chamber and Urban District Advisory Committee. To date there are two plans one to come down Second Avenue and one to go on the tracks
- behind Metro and we don't know what that will mean to us, the outcome of that or what the actual plan will be in reality so we are all curious about this as well.
- Parking remains something that we are all aware of and very caring about the volume and the beauty of success is the volume of people that it brings to your community and we all get to benefit from that but we all are dealing with where to park with all the new development.
- The increase in retailers, we have been presented a lot of information on this in the past year. It continues to be something we would like to see go further and bring in upscale and quality retail. We have great development thanks to Foulger Pratt and it is just going to continue to grow and be better.

Committee Members Top Concerns

Ed Baca- Asher stated that transportation is a big item for me and seeing the purple line go further along than it has. I am a supporter of the light rail system as opposed to a heavy rail system. Also the retail is important as mentioned previously.

Bob Middleton stated that as Genny Hardesty indicated earlier and thought it was very apropos and the other points that she had mentioned are equally important. The Council of the District of Columbia had to answer some very troubling questions about curfew and surveillance and they met those questions head on. As an individual and resident of downtown Silver Spring I have stated for more than a year now that I am in agreement with the Commander that we need surveillance in downtown Silver Spring. In DC they took it a little further and placed it in the residential areas and I am not sure we are ready to go there yet in Silver Spring but we should not close our eyes to the potential effectiveness of the equipment that is available these days and can be of great assistance to the law enforcement men and women who put their lives on the line every day.

Charles Atwell stated that he supports comments from the Chair and Committee members and certainly underscores Bob Middleton view in terms of public safety. We have spent a lot of time discussing basic surveillance within the garages as well as throughout the Central Business District, (CBD). I think it is important that as we go forward and look at the other issues such as transportation, and the expansion of VanGo that we certainly be sensitive to the clean and safe programs that we have that encompasses our own Urban District staff as well as the public safety that Montgomery County Police and Fire Rescue Services offer in downtown Silver Spring. I think our Regional Public Safety Program probably needs to be reviewed to see where we are versus the original plan and see where we benchmarked from our stats from other Central Business Districts and continue to go forward.

Genny Hardesty stated that Barbara Henry who is not here today has accepted to be the new Vice Chair of the Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee.

We will not vote on the minutes or any action taken that need a vote because we do not have a quorum today so these items will be placed on hold until our September because the ***August Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee Meeting is cancelled.***

Genny Hardesty stated that the new members were invited today to get a slight bit of experience of what the Committee is like and we would like each of you to introduce yourselves. Thanks to all of you for offering your services to such a worthy cause.

New Members

Renee Okon stated that she is a resident of downtown Silver Spring and is the owner of Okon Realty located on Wayne and Ramsey Avenue.

Abrielle Andersons stated that she is a resident of downtown Silver Spring and practices Real Estate Litigation with Greenstein, Delorme & Luchs, and P.C. in Washington D.C.

Nancy Schwiesow, Long & Foster stated that she is the Greater Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce Representative.

Pete Esker stated you have heard it all before.

Genny Hardesty stated that the County Executive's nominations have been forwarded to County Council.

Gary Stith stated that County Executive Office sent his recommendation to County Council and new members should be confirmed before Council goes on recess. Jon Lourie is the other nominee and. He lives in the area and has been very active in the community for a long time and has an Architectural Firm in downtown Silver Spring and is another small business representative.

Genny Hardesty brought up the statement in the June minutes regarding how to proceed in format and did not know if it has been resolved.

Bob Middleton stated it was not a question of format it was the question of formatting the minutes and there was no conclusion reached on that but if we were to vote on the minutes today I would be in favor of them because I think Vicki did an outstanding job and for some reason the equipment was not operative during the prior meeting in May.

Police Update

Mitch Cunningham reported that:

- Robberies are up in our District, other Districts and regionally in DC and PG County. Some of the crime emergency tactics that the DC City Council has considered and approved should be helpful. Our officer's have been tracking some of the presence of young people in and around Ellsworth on Friday and Saturday night and have noticed a drop in attendance and we attribute that to the curfew. It may be instead of the curfew actually forcing people to come here they stay where they are because they are afraid if they leave and try and come back they will be spotted. Chief Brad stated curfews can sometimes be a very difficult tactic to force however we do have curfew centers. In the Washington Post, Metro Section today there is an article about the curfews and how it is implemented. They take custody of the kids and take them to the curfew center and their parents are called and if the parents don't show up they are turned over to Juvenile Services.
- One of the robbery trends is actually some young people on BMX bikes and we have tracked them actually committing a burglary last night and we are looking for those two subjects.
- We continue to adjust our staffing on Ellsworth by adding more staff, horses and crossing guards. We are working with the theater to make sure they are responsive to the fact that they draw a lot of people.
- We participated with Jane Redicker at the Chamber sponsored panel discussion yesterday and as I am happy to note none of the questions asked had to do with crime.
- Frank Stone has been promoted to Lieutenant and I met with his replacement Sgt. Mike Hartman who will work during the day from 6 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. four days a week.
- In discussion about video surveillance the County has directed me and members of my staff to prepare a plan. We have done a lot of ground work in identifying where we think the surveillance should go and we have a couple of technical specifications that we need to iron out but that plan will be prepared and sent up through the chain of command and at that point I will let the Committee know so you can exercise influence and support to the process.

Marketing and Special Events

Susan Hoffmann reported that:

- We are the sponsor or co-sponsor of a variety of events. We do the Silver Spring Swings Summer Concert Series which is every Thursday evening, The Jazz Festival which is coming on September 9, Montgomery County Thanksgiving Parade which this year will be November 18 and we co-sponsor a number of other things an Outdoor Film festival which this year is August 24, 25 and 26. We work with and support SILVERDOCS, and Magical Montgomery which is on September 30th. We work with the media and help other groups that want to do an event in downtown Silver Spring providing a marketing resource to the community
- My report is in the packet and if there are questions I would be happy to answer them.
- In my report I make reference that we are going to take the bookmark look and create a banner. After the Jazz Festival we will be installing a new banner series which will have the new website address www.silverspringdowntown.com and we do ads in the Gazette. We will be doing another piece that is going to promote downtown Silver Spring and the hook is the website *why go anywhere else* as well as *why stay anywhere else*. This will be a piece that the hotels will be paying for along with the Conference and Business Bureau. This will be printed for all of us to use but the hotels need a piece and it is essentially generic and does not speak specifically to any one hotel but it talks about the hotels, the history of Silver Spring, what we do, includes photographs of events and old pictures and pictures of what Silver Spring looks like today.
- This piece for the Silver Spring Jazz Festival will go on Metro buses. Metro has really stepped up to the plate this year at a level more than double of what they did last year. They are printing Jazz Festival brochure/program 40,000 copies and will distribute 30,000 at the Metro Station and we will get 10,000 to distribute at the Festival. They are putting things on the outside of the buses and it is going to have a valuation of over \$70,000.00 so they have just been wonderful.

Gary Stith stated because we are doing the marketing for the website I printed out more detail today. On the first page you see in the last two weeks the number of hits we have received and Tuesday we got 812 visits to our website in one day but the highest number was during SILVERDOCS. The shark has gotten a lot of publicity and people have been coming to our website looking at information about the shark and businesses that are doing shark related promotions. We are averaging daily visits of 589 to the website. The second page is the number of hits and we are averaging 34,879 hits a day. Hits are activity on our website in terms of successful hits over time and this is over two weeks. The item Charles Atwell has asked about is where are people coming from? Out of a two week period which I printed out here 4,703 hits had no referral and that means it is people coming directly to the website the rest of the visits listed here from different websites and goggle is the top one and these are people coming through other websites such as Silver Sprung which takes you directly to the new website. Round House Theatre has us on their website and in the two week period we got over 40 some odd hits. There is a variety of places now that have our website link to theirs such as DPWT's website which will direct you to www.silverspringdowntown.com. A lot of the residential projects around town have us on their website because they want people to see how exciting and what is going on in Silver Spring and the best way to do that is through our website.

The next to the last page are the terms people use to do searches to come to our website which I found to be interesting. I peruse the website every once and while to make sure information that people are looking for is up-to-date that we actually have decent information on the website. One item I found interesting was City Place and if you add up all the different ways people did a search on City Place they by far have the most visits in terms of people doing searches and there is a total of 57 and I did not add in some of the businesses that are in City Place that people search for so the number would be even higher. There are several residential projects so when people are looking for things in Silver Spring it is not just businesses, events and restaurants but places to live.

Recently the gentlemen from Bethesda who developed the website now has five contracts with different downtowns to do their websites so he is doing quiet well. He has come back to us as a result of doing other downtowns and has developed some upgrades to the software so he upgraded our software and as we use it we make suggestions to him for upgrades and making the site more user friendly and attractive. Our office is very pleased with the website and how user friendly it is. If you have other suggestions please contact our office.

City Place Mall

Larry Hoffman, H&R Retail who does leasing at City Place Mall reported that:

This has been quiet a roller coaster ride and we have a little bit of momentum behind us now. We had a meeting about month ago with a group and they helped us out by sending large quantities of e-mails to one of our perspective tenants and as it turns out the perspective tenant got bombarded with several hundred e-mails and they have started moving forward again with the deal, we are not there yet but it is something positive and something we hope to be able to use Discovery for because it is obviously a good tool to get the retailers who are very cold on coming to City Place because it does not have the glamour that Peterson has. We do have a bunch of tenants opening up relatively soon. There is a Day Spa which is very high end and under construction but they have had some construction issues but they seems to be getting better. We have a bunch of perspective tenants that are looking and I am talking to a hotel and a couple of other restaurants etc.

Discussion

Bob Middleton asked if the perspective tenant was TARGET

Larry Hoffman responded that TARGET could not fit on the property. Target typical footprint is 125,000 square feet. Our fourth floor is 40,000 square feet.

Bob Middleton asked if they would entertain getting another bank in City Place. The Bank of America is so popular and it stops traffic.

Larry Hoffman stated that they do not have any other space that has an exterior entrance and that is why PNC did not take the space because they were not satisfied with the exterior presence and the building is considered historic.

Genny Hardesty asked if the total square footage is 125, 000 square feet.

Larry Hoffman responded no it is a little more than that because we are 5 ½ levels so it about 250,000 square feet.

Genny Hardesty asked what City Place Mall's current occupancy is.

Larry Hoffman stated most of the tenants at City Place are temporary. Dierman has been at risk for several years for a lot of money holding out for the right tenants. We have the space for at least two anchors which is the key to it all but it has been very challenging

Charles Atwell stated that the Committee has had a lot of retail discussions about City Place and that he was delighted that they are here today. We have had discussions with several representatives of different retail groups coming and talking with us. I do understand the concept that the mall was not designed as a free standing mall but in concert with other things going on in Silver Spring. I would like to know what your short term and long term strategies are and I do understand that a lot of your tenants are temporary and the feedback we receive is when people visit there and see the tenants that you have they don't necessarily process the fact that they are temporary tenants and there is a perception from a safety point of view and perception of Downtown Silver Spring is something we have struggled with for a long time and we are getting over the humps with the help of our uniform people and security staff from the different properties.

Larry Hoffman stated that over the years we have had a lot of discussions about our vacancies and temporary tenants and whether you can convince higher end merchants to come to the mall. The other side is that you walk in and see 100% leased and somewhat vibrant and we explain to them that we are changing the project and bringing upscale. We have been successful in making a lot of money for other people and we are combating the better retail that is out on the street now. We knew Peterson would be able to fill up their street a lot easier and quicker than us because we have a historic constraints and it is frustrating. The long term strategy is to make the mall into a higher end project and the concept is that we have to get a big name retailer and others will trickle down from there.

Pete Esker stated to Larry Hoffman that a couple of years ago when City Place was at one of its low point security and businesses wise you made a presentation to the SSCAB about your plans for the future and I would have to say that you have lived up to everything that you said. At that time you outlined a short and long term vision for City Place and you stated that you were going to invest money, time and energy into improving it and you have and it was tough. If you go there today you see a brighter, warmer more inviting active place with a variety of businesses and I commend you for staying through the very bad times when you were fed a bill of goods in the beginning about paradise on earth is coming here and I just think that people need to be aware that you have said things and done things.

Larry Hoffman stated that they have not given up.

Bob Middleton stated he has been informally dialoguing with Auriel Martin for the last year and half in terms of things that City Place needs and things that just don't seem right and I echo Pete Esker's comments. You all have really made an effort to clean City Place up and I think you should be applauded for that. I think candidly one of the problems you would be having with

high end retailer is the logistics of your building because you can not easily and readily get from one place in the mall to the other.

Larry Hoffman stated City Place was designed purposely that way and theoretically you could change the escalators and solve that problem but if you are a merchant off the opposite end of the bridge and the escalator went straight down you would be upset that we changed the escalators so the person would not have to walk by your business so the concept is to have the flow so the customer has to go by your stores. The theatre space does not really belong to City Place and to retrofit that space with the slopped floors is a tremendous amount of money and there are only a hand full of tenants of that size that can afford to use that space.

Genny Hardesty stated as City Place gets more definite plans we would like to invite you back for another updated presentation. I am also wondering if you get the big name retailer that you are in negotiation with and the e-mails were successful and they brought things back to the table do you have a timetable that you are looking at and possibly your negotiations will either move forward or not.

Larry Hoffman stated you get a person in the real estate environment who is at the mercy of the person in the operations department and operations does not get paid but the real estate person received payment for the number of units they open. The operations person receives a bonus on the number they put on it and if operations sees it not going to hit that number he is going to fight the real estate person.

Genny Hardesty asked Larry Hoffman if he could turn the corner with this tenant would there be enough to turn the corner for the entire mall with the fact of the public knowing and other retailers knowing that X came, they signed and willing do you think that would start a domino affect with other retailers.

Larry Hoffman responded absolutely.

Genny Hardesty stated that certainly from our perspective with the e-mail campaign that you mentioned earlier that is something we can do at any time because we want to see you succeed and benefit from this as well as the citizens in this area that work, live and play here to benefit as well so anything this Committee can do please let us know.

Gary Stith stated that information has been given to Dierman Group about our ULI Panel and one of the issues they have asked them to look at is City Place and we would like Dierman to be a part of the tour and discussion with the ULI Group to generate any ideas that may be helpful to City Place.

Ripley District

Gary Stith reported that:

- Last week we had a joint meeting with the Health and Human Service Committee of County Council and the Planning Housing and Economic Development Committee. We met at a joint meeting because they had heard some rumbling that some things may be happening in the Ripley District and it may have some impacts on Progress Place which is located in the

Ripley District. We went through a fairly extensive conversation with them about what things are going on in this area, when it might happen, what effect it would have on Progress Place and what we are doing to make sure Progress Place and its programs would continue to be in Silver Spring in some form. We see the potential of Progress Place being in a better form and the things that are going to happen should not be considered as a threat to Progress Place but an opportunity.

- The Ripley District is from Wayne Avenue south between the railroad track and Georgia Avenue and the area is zoned CBD 2 which means it can have a mixed use project and a floor area ratio of 5 which is very high density so it has a lot of potential in terms density. It does have frontage on Georgia and it is very close to the transit center and when Ripley is built through it will have a direct street connection to the transit center and because of that it is very well located and has a high level of potential for redevelopment. A lot of the properties in this area are very under utilized and needs to be cleaned up badly.
- KSI is the only project in this area that has actually been approved and it looks like it will be moving forward and they have given you a presentation on that site and you were supportive and they have been through all their design and reviews with Park and Planning. One of their amenities they are doing to get the higher density is to meet the sector plan requirements of extending Dixon through the garage at Bonifant and the reason is that they are building this piece of Dixon adjacent to their property and the piece through the garage so Dixon would actually penetrate through that garage. The garage was designed for that to happen and it has always been intended that this would happen and it will cost some money and the County had not seen the need to move forward on that but now with this development and future development that connection through the garage is very important. KSI is doing that and they will be doing it in a timeframe so they actually make the penetration through the garage fairly soon so that it is completed before the bus operation moves for the interim bus operating facility while the transit center is being built because we did not want this construction going on at the same time. The kiss-n-ride facility will be in the first level of this garage so we want that done and out of the way. They will retain a barrier at the south end of the garage because they won't open up this piece of the street until they have built their building which will be later.
- The County has gone through Phase I of a facility planning process for the extension of Dixon on through the Ripley District and based on that the County Council Transportation Environmental Committee recommended that they not proceed with Phase II. Based on Phase I any future development that may occur here by developers would be required to make the improvements an extension of Dixon as a part of their development project and this is in the Sector Plan so Park and Planning has the ability to make that a requirement of future development in this area so the County is not moving forward with that project but sees it happening as a part of the ultimate redevelopment that private developers would do
- Other projects in this area include the Metropolitan Branch Trail which is a bikeway that connects the transit center and goes on down through and connects to the Takoma Park and beyond Takoma Park through the District to Union Station so this is a regional trail. They just completed Phase I and Council has given direction to DPWT about moving into Phase II and it will be 2008 before that actually is put into the County Capital Improvement budget. The other project that is going on that could impact on this area is two of the three alternate alignments for the Bi-County Transitway go through here. The alignment that comes through on this side of the transit center project and one alignment comes down Silver Spring Avenue crosses under Georgia Avenue below grade and remains underground and kind of

swings up between the houses that face Silver Spring Avenue on the south and Thayer on the north. The other alignment is to come across Georgia Avenue and down Sligo either at grade or underground and the other alignment for that is on Wayne and Second Avenue so these are the three alignments that the Bi-County Transitway are considering so it will be kind of difficult for anyone to start doing real development projects that are adjacent to that until MTA comes up with their recommended alignment and that will not be until next spring so this is an issue that will hang up things happening along the backside of this area.

- The County retained across the backside of the fire station site property that could be used either for the Metropolitan Branch Trail or for an alignment for the Bi-County Transitway. The impact these things would have on Progress Place which was an old bakery purchased by the County 1992 using Community Development Block Grant funds. The Department of Housing and Community Affairs bought and renovated the building and HHS contracts with Shepherd's Table and Community Ministries services to the homeless in Silver Spring. As we go through the stages of finalizing the program requirements we will have some community process that will involve this Committee, other groups in downtown and the broader community to participate and have input into it. Our first step in this is if we have to do a new building what will the building include, how big would it be, what type of programs would it contain and who would it serve and Council has encouraged us to move forward and think bigger with more training and job programs than what they offer now.
- The County has received an unsolicited proposal to purchase both Progress Place property and parking lot #20 which is adjacent to it and the County also owns another single lot here and altogether these three properties are about 60,000 square feet. 60,000 square feet in a CBD 2 and a mix use project would be 5 x 60,000 which would be 300,000 square feet so this is a fairly significant development potential just on the County property and if that is combined with some other adjacent properties it could be incorporated into an even larger project and that level of development also represents a fairly significant value at current ball park kinds of values. We are talking about \$100.00 dollars in FAR foot which means about 30 million dollars of value so the County would have the funding if the incorporated County property into a mix use or joint development project with a private developer that could use those funds to go back and replace Progress Place and it may be necessary to add some public parking. Usually in a joint project we specify a certain level of affordable housing in terms of MPDU's and work force housing. Typically in our joint development project we require a level of 30% of affordable units in a project where County property runs into it so these are the kinds of things if the County went into a joint development project and were to sale the property we would very likely say that Progress Place either has to be replaced based on our program requirements we develop either in this project or somewhere else in downtown Silver Spring that is acceptable and also look for some public parking to be incorporated into this and the developer would certainly put in private parking but we would require a certain level of public parking. They would have to make way for the bikeway path, extend the street and other public improvements that are in the Sector Plan and would be required of any redevelopment of this area and of course the affordable housing. There may be other requirements that we might come up with but that process is usually laid out in Request for Proposal that we would put out publicly and any developer could respond to that. At 60,000 square feet that is big enough that the developer could just take the County property and develop it and not necessarily have to have some adjacent property. We have found other places where the County had a smaller parcel and really could not develop it unless you combined it with some adjacent parcels.

- The Chief Administrative Officer responded to the unsolicited offer to purchase the property by stating that they would be investigating this and putting together a recommendation and that will go to the next County Executive so nothing will happen until after the elections and even at that point whether we move forward and market things that are going on now in terms of housing and residential demand could slow that down.
- This area that has frontage on Georgia Avenue could have some significant potential office development. Office is starting to be the place for the market to go. In Silver Spring we have an office vacancy rate of less than 3% which is phenomenal and I think it is the lowest in the entire region and ten years ago we were at 39% so we have turned around and I think the market for office is probably the next hot development opportunity.
- The redevelopment in this area will happen because it is too close to Metro and has too good of frontage on Georgia Avenue for it not to happen. The County could become a part of this and I think it is in every one's best interest if the redevelopment in this area were done more comprehensively versus piecemeal and if the County puts its property into the mix that would create the opportunity for this area to be developed more comprehensively. As things move forward and there is on-going activity in the area I will keep the Committee and community informed.

Charles Atwell asked what the County's expectation in terms of a location for Progress Place.

Gary Stith responded that the County has not mentioned an exact location only that Progress Place needs to stay in downtown Silver Spring in the CBD. Personally I think it might be easier politically if it stays here versus moving closer to some of the neighborhoods but I think that depends on what options are presented, how the options are received and the kind of facility.

Charles Atwell asked would that be a condition of development.

Gary Stith responded yes and the condition is that Progress Place has to stay in downtown Silver Spring but we could be more specific and say it has to stay in this development project but that decision has not been made. The County has its Police, Fire and Urban District offices here and if the development included this property then you could develop the Progress Place piece of development here and face it toward the County's property and that way it could kind of be monitored by the other County functions that are here.

Urban District Report

Jerry Sanford reported that:

- The Urban District is a special taxing district and we oversee the day to day operations of what goes on down here. The enhanced level of services the property owners are paying extra for. We provide a wide range of services but the most visible services are our clean and safe services and clean and safe is actually a catch phrase that businesses improvement District use but here we have an enhanced level whether it is the landscaping or daily street sweeping or the quick reaction of graffiti removal. On the CBD side it is the good will ambassador that we have on the street they are not police officers, special police officer or security guards but they are a uniformed presence on the street to make people feel safe, answer questions, give directions and provide motorist assistance if someone is locked out of their vehicle or needs a jumpstart. The staff worked very closely with the Police Department and we attend CSAFE

and security meetings and work closely with the Fire Department and we are really excited about our new space that we are in at 8110 Georgia Avenue 3rd floor.

- We will be having a grand opening of the facility on Sunday, July 23, 1-4 p.m. and it is an open house. The actual activities will start at 2:30 p.m. and there will be a moon bounce, and food. This is a multi-use facility the Fire Department occupies the 1st floor, the Police Department occupies the 2nd floor and the Urban District Office occupies the 3rd floor and the 4th floor is vacant but is going to be potentially an interactive public safety kids zone and is model after a program from New York and the County is very excited about that.
- Ray's Steak House that took the Old Crisfield location on Colesville and Georgia is having a grand opening on July 27 at 5:30 p.m.
- The Urban District Staff has just finished Survival Spanish class and the training was tailored specifically for our staff so they can respond to some of the typical questions they are getting in the Central Business District.
- We have nine staff members that are taking a class for Community Emergency Response Training and is under the Department of Homeland Security and oversees this National Program and it is training people in the community to be able to assist in a natural or man made disaster. They are just finishing the written portion of the class and will begin their practical portion.
- We continue to work with Department Public Works and Transportation, (DPWT) on lighting improvement of Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road and we are working with DPWT and WMTA on the interim operation facility of the transit center to make sure it is a smooth transition as possible during the two years of construction We requested an additional eight staff during the period of construction to have an additional presence in the area to deal with any type of issues that may occur and we were granted that additional staffing.
- DHCA is just about complete with streetscape improvements that were part of the Fenton Street Village on Thayer and Bonifant Street.

Charles Atwell stated that on the Thayer Avenue streetscaping that he assumed the contractor has not turned that over to the County yet so what about the trees over there.

Jerry Sanford stated that he had talked with Roger Stanley yesterday about the trees and he is working with the contractor to get some gator bags on them and everything is still under warranty and still the Contractors responsibility.

Charles Atwell asked if the bed in front of Safeway was Safeway's responsibility and if it was Roger Stanley responsibility to act as liaison to work with Safeway on landscaping that.

Jerry Sanford responded that he believed everything behind the brick wall is Safeway's responsibility. No that would be my responsibility to work with them.

Genny Hardesty thanked Jerry and his staff for doing a fine job around Downtown Silver Spring and it is really noticed.

Director Reports:

Gary Stith reported that:

He hoped Committee members would be able to attend the grand opening of the facility on Sunday, July 23, 1-4 p.m.

Charles Atwell asked if there would be additional signage of the building other than the Fire Department. The Police and Urban District don't have any signage.

Gary Stith stated that at one point they were going to put the Police Shield and Urban District thing in the pre-cast element of the building but it was cut out due to the budget constraints. I will talk to Mike Lowe to see if there is still money to be able to do that.

I talk to Rob Parker who is the Property Manager for the Peterson Company this afternoon. They have been working on the fountain and as you are aware some of the glass tiles broken and they were concerned that children playing in the fountain would get injured. They have been trying to figure out what caused that and there are a lot of different theories and they think because of the installation which was done according to the manufacturer specification was not proper so the manufacturer is actually supplying the new materials for free and the maintenance of this is the developer responsibility so this is not County taxes. It was built according specifications but the manufacturer has now decided those specification might not have been appropriate so they have come up with some different specifications for the installation and providing materials for free so Foulger/Pratt and Peterson are doing it and all they have to pay is the cost of the installer but when they removed the tiles and inspecting the sub-base there were problems so they were taking that out and they found water between two layers of the sub-base which indicated to them that there was a leak in the plumbing so they did pressure test and found that five jets were damaged and probably happened doing installation so they have ordered them and it has taken time and they are suppose to get here Monday and they have started taking out the damaged jets and will finish that up next week. The artist and installer are both on vacation so when they return hopefully the jets will have been replaced. They also were concerned that when the sub-base was installed it was in the winter time and while they had it tented and heated it really did not cure well enough so now that will have to allow a cure time for the sub-base to make sure it is cured before they put the tile over top of it. It probably will not be completed until the end of August.

Z-Pizza and Fuddruckers are in build out down on Ellsworth.

Charles Atwell stated that at a previous meeting we had mentioned the Birchmere and we had two representative here I thought the Committee voted to write a letter of support. There is apparently some interest from the Silver Spring Forward folks and the timing when it goes to the County Executive with other letters.

Gary Stith stated yes and that he had not done the letter but he would. What they are trying to do is get the County Executive to put in a capital budget request to the Governors Office to be included in the next year's state budget to help with part of the financing. The Silver Spring Forward group is doing a fantastic job of raising the political awareness of that project and this type of thing needs to happen to keep things coming to Silver Spring because there are a lot of people outside of Silver Spring that think we are done.

We had scheduled a presentation on the Civic Building/ Veteran Plaza on July 12 and the budget estimate came in and part of the reason why there was some difficulty with it was the original estimator that was working on the project walked away from the project because they said they had too much work so they had to get a new budget estimator and by doing that the estimates came in significantly different than before and we are trying to reconcile that and see if it is a difference of the way the budget estimators do it and we are also doing some value engineering and looking at delete alternates and things like that. Frankly estimates are just estimates and you won't really know what the project will cost until you put it out on the street and bid it. Every day that the project is delayed in going out for bid is costing us \$2,000 to \$8,000 dollars because cost of construction continues to climb so we are trying very hard to keep the project on schedule but we are figuring out what adjustments to make. We will be working with the stakeholders on what those adjustments are and we will come back and make a public presentation and update this Committee.

The problem with the cost estimates was not with the Plaza and the Pavilion. The problem is with the building and that is what we are trying to figure out why because we did not change the building other than adding about \$500,000 dollars into the budget for upgrading the finishes. So we are trying to figure out why the building cost went up and what can be done about.

Meeting adjourned 5:30 p.m.